We claim:

1. A method of operating a portable device that includes a sensor to capture image or audio data, comprising:

transferring the captured data to a remote device;

decoding a watermark at the remote device; and

returning corresponding data to the portable device.

2. The method of claim 1 in which the corresponding data is decoded watermark data.

3. The method of claim 1 which further includes indexing a database with reference to at least a portion of the decoded watermark to obtain a computer address corresponding thereto, and returning the computer address to the portable device.

4. The method of claim 1 which further includes indexing a database with reference to at least a portion of the decoded watermark to obtain a computer address corresponding thereto, and receiving content data from said computer address at a destination device.

5. The method of claim 4 in which the destination device is co-located with the portable device.

6. The method of claim 5 in which the destination device comprises the portable device.

7. The method of claim 4 in which the destination device is remote from the portable device.

8. The method of claim 1 in which the transferring step occurs autonomously, without user intervention.

9. The method of claim 1 in which a user initiates the transferring step by performing an action.

10. The method of claim 9 in which the user initiates the transferring step by operating a button.

11. The method of claim 1 in which the corresponding data is audio or image data like that captured by the portable device sensor, but of higher fidelity.

12. The method of claim 1 in which the corresponding data is audio or image data that is not simply a higher fidelity version of the audio or image data captured by the portable device sensor.

13. A cell phone for performing the method of claim 1.

14. A method of operating a portable device that includes a sensor to capture image or audio data, comprising:

decoding watermark data from the image or audio data, the watermark serving to identify corresponding content stored in a repository; and

transferring at least a portion of the watermark data to a remote device, and sending instruction data with said watermark data, said instruction data serving to specify an action to be taken with the content stored in the repository.

15. The method of claim 14 in which the action is transmission of the content from the repository to the portable device.

16. The method of claim 14 in which the action is transmission of the content from the repository to a destination remote from the portable device.

17. The method of claim 14 in which the instruction data depends, at least in part, on the bandwidth of a network connection available to link the portable device to another device.

18. The method of claim 14 in which said content is audio or image data like that captured by the portable device sensor, but of higher fidelity.

19. The method of claim 14 in which said content is audio or image data that is not simply a higher fidelity version of the audio or image data captured by the portable device sensor.

20. A method of operating a device that includes a sensor to capture image or audio data, comprising:

capturing image or audio data with the sensor;

decoding a digital watermark from the captured data;

using the digital watermark to fetch a pristine version of the captured data;

substituting the pristine version for at least a part of the captured data to create a new data object; and

rendering the new data object on an output device.

21. In a digital audio device that includes a sensor to capture image or audio data, a method comprising:

transferring the captured data to a remote device for extraction of a digital watermark at the remote device; and

returning corresponding data to the digital audio device.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the digital audio device comprises a wireless telephone.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said transferring comprises wirelessly transferring.

24. In a digital audio device that includes: i) a sensor to capture image or audio data, and ii) a digital watermark decoder, a method comprising:

receiving captured data from the sensor, the captured data comprising a digital watermark embedded therein, the digital watermark including at least auxiliary data;

decoding the digital watermark with the digital watermark decoder to obtain the auxiliary data;

wirelessly transferring the auxiliary data to a remote device; and

receiving from the remote device data corresponding to the auxiliary data.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the digital audio device comprises a wireless telephone.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the digital watermark is embedded in the data through modifications of the image or audio data.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein the image or audio data comprises a carrier, and the digital watermark is embedded in the carrier through modifications of the carrier.

28. A wireless reception device sized for fitting in a user's pocket or purse, said wireless reception device comprising:

a battery to power said wireless reception device;

a sensor to capture image or audio data;

electronic memory circuitry; and

electronic processing circuitry, wherein said electronic memory circuitry includes executable programming instructions stored therein for execution on said electronic processing circuitry, said executable programming instructions comprising a steganographic decoder for discerning auxiliary data steganographically embedded in data captured by said sensor, said executable programming instructions further comprising instructions to control some aspect of said wireless reception device, and wherein the aspect involves the auxiliary data.

29. The wireless reception device of claim 28, wherein said wireless reception device comprises a wireless telephone.

30. The wireless reception device of claim 28, wherein said electronic processing circuitry comprises a microprocessor.

31. The wireless reception device of claim 28, wherein said steganographic decoder
comprises a digital watermark decoder.

32. The wireless reception device of claim 31, wherein the steganographically embedded auxiliary data comprises a digital watermark, and wherein the digital watermark is embedded in the data captured by said sensor through modifications of the data.